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Liberty

NOT THE DAUGHTER BUT THE MOTHER OF ORDER — PROUDHON

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"For always in thine eyes, O Liberty!
Shines that high light whereby the world is saved;
And though thou slay us, we will trust in thee."

JOHN HAY.

On Picket Duty.

The Spanish government is exhibiting an interest in Anarchism even beyond the limits of its Archy. I lately received from Canovas del Castillo a request for a catalogue of my publications.

The subscription rates for Liberty to subscribers in Great Britain are: three months, nine pence; six months, eighteen pence; one year, three shillings. Remittances may be made directly to this office, or to Murdoch & Co., 26 Paternoster Square, London.

Our poets are multiplying. A new and very promising one is William Francis Barnard, one of a Chicago group of young men of artistic temperament who have lately become adherents of Anarchism. His first contribution to Liberty, "Waiting,"—a remarkably fine production,—will not, I hope, be his last.

The translation of M. Arsène Alexandre's admirable article on "The Thirty-Six Trades of the State" is put in editorial type in the present issue, because it is my intention to issue it as a small pamphlet, for which purpose the smaller type would have been less suitable. I hope to do a good deal in future in the way of circulating leaflets, tracts, and tiny pamphlets at a very low price, and shall be able to, if my readers give me the necessary encouragement by their coöperation. There is many an article in the early issues of Liberty that might profitably be reproduced. As each pamphlet will carry advertisements of Liberty and its literature, not a few readers will be induced to pursue the study of Anarchism.

On the day of the appearance of the November number of Liberty I chanced to meet a gentleman whose name, were I to give it, would instantly be recognized by all Single Taxers as that of one of the keenest, ablest, stanchest, and most trusted of their leaders. "Well," said he, "I see that you've roasted Mr. George." "Yes," said I. And his only comment was: "Well, he deserves it." It is a pity that all Single Taxers are not as well informed regarding the real character of their teacher, and it shall not be my fault if they remain in ignorance. I have reprinted my article, "Henry George, Traitor," in the form of a small sixteen-page pamphlet, upon which I have placed a merely nominal price, in order that lovers of free speech and haters of hypocrisy may be able to circulate it freely among all who, not knowing Henry George, give him their esteem and admiration. One hundred copies will be sent to any address, carriage paid, on receipt of eighty cents. I hope that many of Liberty's readers will take advantage of the opportunity.

An English comrade has hit upon a good idea. Pasted upon one side of the envelope that contained a recent letter from him was a copy of Gordak's effective poem, "The Ballot," the margins having been trimmed to fit the envelope. By this method a leaflet may be brought to the attention, not only of the addressee, but also of all those through whose hands the letter may pass *en route*. While the State forces us to employ it as our letter-carrier, what could be more fitting than to thus improve the opportunity to plant the seeds of rebellion in the hearts and heads of its hirelings?

Anarchists will appreciate the following anecdote related of Madame Grassini, who was in succession the mistress of Napoleon and the duke of Wellington. Having been stopped near Naples by banditti, who proceeded to plunder her, she at first attempted an appeal to their humanity; but, finding that they continued to search every corner of her carriage, she said to them: "My dear robbers, you may take everything I possess, but do not deprive me, I beseech you, of one thing which I value more than you possibly can; I mean the portrait of our dear government. I care not for the diamonds, but pray leave me the portrait." They accordingly broke off the mounting of Napoleon's portrait, and restored to her the beloved picture.

Those Anarchists and libertarians that mourn the loss of a man who, though seeking their fellowship in private, shamefully abused their cause in public doubtless understand their grief, but to me it is incomprehensible. The editor of Liberty at least has no tears to shed over the death of the false Freethinker who, shortly after the Chicago tragedy, hypocritically attacked Anarchy in the columns of his paper, and then became responsible for the following outrageous utterance (contained in a letter addressed to him) by publicly accepting it as a compliment: "You certainly take the right view of that pernicious creed [Anarchy]. The advocates of that murderous doctrine ought to have the heavy hand of good law and good government placed with a squelching force upon them. There is only one way to deal with those who advocate Anarchy, and those who try to practically carry it out; and that is to make an example of its agitators. Hang every one of them, and expose their carcasses to view, as a warning to others who are so inclined." No man seeking his intimacies among Anarchistic agitators (his very death occurred in the apartment of one of the most prominent Anarchists in the United States) could at the same time have fathered that sentiment concerning them, unless he was essentially contemptible and base; and I am glad that I did not wait until he was dead to say so. Now that he is gone, let him be forgotten.

Because an English actor is giving public readings for the benefit of privately-managed hospitals my friend Bernard Shaw breaks out in the "Saturday Review" in denunciation of this "enrichment of the rate-payers of the towns the actor visits at the expense of the people who pay for tickets to hear him read." The reason of these tears is that the conduct of the actor tends to thwart Mr. Shaw and his Fabian friends, with their municipal theatres, etc., in the prosecution of their determination to impoverish rate-payers in order to enrich the people who desire to hear actors read. Whenever one man voluntarily gives something to other men, Mr. Shaw is wild with grief, but, when one man, if he be a policeman, forcibly takes something from other men, he thinks the millennium is nigh. Could there be a more amusing inversion of common sense and common honesty? Of course I quite agree with Mr. Shaw that the actor whose policy he criticises had much better devote the proceeds of his readings to the furtherance of some high artistic or philosophic interest than to the support of hospitals. In my view it will prove of little moment in the long run whether the world has one hospital more or less, whereas one theatre or one periodical, if of the right sort, might so radically change the future of mankind as to permanently lessen the necessity of hospitals. But this is not the consideration that influences Mr. Shaw. He asks individuals not to give for the support of hospitals, because, if they do so give, the people will no longer be robbed for the support of hospitals, and, on the other hand, he urges individuals to give for the support of a rational drama, because he has little hope that, if they do not so give, the people will ever be robbed for the support of a rational drama. We have heard of the father who gave the parting advice to his son: "Get money; get it honestly if you can, but get money." If we cannot altogether approve this counsel, we may at least contrast it favorably with the Fabian advice to hospitals and theatres: "Get money; get it dishonestly if you can, but get money."

Liberty.

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"In abolishing rent and interest, the last vestiges of old-time slavery, the Revolution abolishes at one stroke the sword of the executioner, the seal of the magistrate, the club of the policeman, the gauge of the excisemen, the erasing-knife of the department clerk, all those insignia of Politics, which young Liberty grinds beneath her heel." — PROUDHON.

☞ The appearance in the editorial column of articles over other signatures than the editor's initial indicates that the editor approves their central purpose and general tenor, though he does not hold himself responsible for every phrase or word. But the appearance in other parts of the paper of articles by the same or other writers by no means indicates that he disapproves them in any respect, such disposition of them being governed largely by motives of convenience.

Strikers and Picket Duty.

Two interesting labor cases have lately been decided,—one in an English court, the other in an American. The question involved is the right of strikers to organize and maintain a patrol. In the American case the facts are as follows. The striking employees of a Boston manufacturing firm detailed several of their members to patrol the street in front of the factory and accost would-be applicants for the vacant places for the purpose of persuading them to keep away. The employers, alleging that the picketing strikers interfered with their business and prevented them from hiring new men, applied for an injunction restraining them from maintaining the patrol. The injunction was granted, and the supreme court, on appeal, upheld the issuance of the order.

It was not shown that the patrol used any force or indulged in any threats of violence, but the court holds that proof of this is unnecessary. It says that the employees and the would-be applicants were entitled to be protected even against such disturbance and interference as resulted from the employment of persuasion and social pressure. The head and front of the patrol's offending was the successful attempt to injure the business.

Two judges delivered dissenting opinions. Justice Holmes, a liberal and progressive man, argues very ably and logically against the view of the majority of the court, and Chief Justice Field concurs in his reasoning. According to the minority's view, the denial of the right of patrolling strikers to approach non-union men, inform them of the situation, and peacefully persuade them to make no application for the vacant places, is contrary to authority as well as principle. If it is admitted, says Judge Holmes, that the acts complained of would be legitimate in the case of a single individual, they cannot possibly become unlawful when committed by several persons acting together. In taking this ground, Judge Holmes not only departs from the old and established legal view, but actually advances beyond the position of the author of the essay "On Liberty," John Stuart Mill, who maintained and defended the contrary doctrine. Mill, so progressive for his time, opposed boycotting as an aggression, and the implication of his argument would have led him to endorse a decision like that of the Boston court. That two judges should rise to a higher and more scientific conception of liberty than even Mill's is certainly a gratifying sign of the times. Judge Holmes deserves to be quoted:

"If it be true that workingmen may combine with a view, among other things, to getting as much as they can for their labor, just as capital may combine with a view to getting the greatest possible return, it must be true that, when combined, they have the same liberty that combined capital has to support their interests by argument, persuasion, and the bestowal or refusal of those advantages which they otherwise lawfully control.

"I can remember when many people thought that, apart from violence or breach of contract, strikes were wicked, as organized refusals to work. I suppose that intelligent economists and legislators have given up that notion today. I feel pretty confident that they equally will abandon the idea that an organized refusal by workmen of social intercourse with a man who shall enter their antagonist's employ is unlawful, if it is dissociated from any threat of violence, and is made for the sole object of prevailing, if possible, in a contest with their employer about the rate of wages."

The prospects would be much brighter, however, if the trades-unionists themselves entertained more sound notions on the subject. They are everywhere agitating for laws against blacklisting, and hailing with delight legislation restricting the right of railroads and other corporations to boycott discharged employees. Doubtless they fail to perceive that blacklisting is merely a form of boycotting, and that there is a palpable inconsistency between their objection to blacklisting and their criticism of the Massachusetts decision. The leaders who have denounced the latter as a dangerous invasion of labor's rights would not stultify themselves by applauding anti-blacklist laws did they even dimly discern the identity of the principle involved. Fortunately, a few of the more intelligent of them are beginning to realize the unsoundness of their attitude. It gives me pleasure to state that "The Federationist," the official organ of the Federation of Labor, recently welcomed an article of mine in which the right of capitalists and workmen to boycott and blacklist was openly and unequivocally upheld. That this view has elicited no remonstrances or protests is not without significance.

In the English case above referred to the facts were similar to those of the Boston case. And what was the ruling of the court? Strange as it may seem, the decision was that, while a patrol could be legitimately maintained, the strikers doing picket duty must limit themselves to the imparting of information and stop short of giving advice or attempting to persuade. In other words, the patrol might approach any intending applicant and lay the exact facts before him, but it must not use "persuasion" or "social pressure" to induce him to refrain from applying. Perhaps we ought to be thankful for the concession, and recognize in it a short step in advance of the Boston position, but it is certainly a lame, illogical, silly, absurd distinction which is sought to be made. Information, but no appeal! As if any court could draw a line between giving information and making an appeal; as if an indirect appeal could not be made in the form of information, and as if any substantial difference existed between direct and indirect appeals! Whose right is infringed by appeal or persuasion?. Certainly not the intending applicant's, since he is not compelled to stay and listen; and, if he were compelled, the aggression would be in the compulsion, in the improper imprisonment, rather than in the appeal. So far as the employer is concerned, he may be "injured" fully as much by the imparting of information and maintenance of a patrol as by persuasion and social pressure. Yet, if injury is not the test, what other test is applied by the court?

Courts are slow and by no means sure, but they cannot long resist the tendencies and influences to which Judge Holmes refers,—the increasing and unconscious recognition of the principle of equal liberty. V. Y.

The Thirty-Six Trades of the State.*

—What is the State?
—Everything.
—What should it be?
—Nothing.

The doorkeepers of the chamber of deputies ejected the other day a worthy man wearing a blue blouse and carrying a basket,—a peasant who was determined to make his way into the Palais-Bourbon, and who cried with all his might: "But don't I tell you that I want to see the State?"

This man was in his right. When they ask him for money, they say to him: "It is for the State," and, when he wants to see this State of which they talk so much, especially when the appropriation bill is under discussion, they laugh in his face.

After all, perhaps his attention was not evil; he desired to bring the State a goose from his farm, or a pair of ducks, or a toothsome chitterling. But they hustle him about, and he is forced to go back with his basket to his country home, without knowing what the State looks like. Let him be consoled; he is not the only one, and we ourselves should have been much embarrassed had he asked us for the information.

We hear the State spoken of continually; we are not acquainted with it; we have the greatest respect for it; we know that it commits many stupidities, but that it commits them with authority. When an omnipotent king said: "I am the State," we had the resource of representing to ourselves the State in the form of a luxurious and haughty gentleman, with a handsome aquiline nose, holding a globe in one hand and a sceptre in the other. This always gave a feeling of security. Now it has no form; it is formless. It is a mist behind a wicket; it is a prison door or some decorated person. We are at liberty to suppose it to be a many-headed calf, a Hindoo idol hidden in the depths of a dark temple, or a slimy monster crawling in a cave.

* Translated from "Le Figaro" by the editor of Liberty.

Nevertheless, though we know nothing at all as to the nature and form of the personage, and though we are no farther advanced than the peasant ejected from the Greek temple which he supposed to be the residence of the big beast, at least we are informed as to its occupations and its aptitudes.

The State possesses the talent, the privilege, or the impudence to undertake at least thirty-six trades. As it is supposed to work at them for our benefit, whether it please us or not, we are obliged to pay it for its work, even when it is spoiled, but we have the satisfaction of laughing at it.

The State is extremely well known, in the first place, as a dealer in matches. It sells them at higher prices than matches command elsewhere, but we know that they will not light, and in this fact we have material for gayety of which it would grieve us to be deprived. When Swedish matches came from Sweden, they burned admirably; now that they are made in France, they refuse, but it is the fault of Ibsen—who is a Norwegian.

But we should not judge the State by the quality of its matches. If you knew how well it works at the rest of its trades! It is a theatrical manager, or an investor in theatrical enterprises. It supplies four theatres with funds,—one more than Cadet-Roussel; two are for music and two for literature; but, as they cost a great deal and cannot, after paying the expense of scenery and company, afford the luxury of producing original works, these are played at Brussels.

Nevertheless, do not judge the State by the quality of its matches and the novelty of its *répertoire*. If you knew how skilful it is in every other industry! It is a dealer in tobacco. Its tobacco is like other tobaccos; only it is high in price. You can get it in Belgium, under the name of Belgian tobacco, for half the money. But, Great God! do not go to the length of condemning the State because it manages its theatres shabbily, charges too much for its tobacco, and manufactures harmless matches. It has so many other strings to its bow!

It is a collector of pictures and of objects of ancient art. But, as one can never be sure about these satanic ancients, for some years it has bought nothing but ancient objects manufactured by moderns. With the living there is at least security against deception.

Moreover, as among its trades figures that of Mecenas, and as it directs the fine arts, it believes it well to buy also of the moderns modern works. Only, to be sure that these works shall be really French, it buys them only of the painters whom it sends to Rome. Then it has some little preferences of its own. One may be sure, for example, that it gives no orders to those who are not known in the administrative bureaus; but how can you expect the bureaus to know people whom they do not know?

The State is an architect. Ah! but here no one can give it lessons. In order to be very sure of escaping the critics, it erects nothing but beautiful Renaissance edifices with Greek pediments and Louis XIV masks. These are models, it seems, which have stood their tests. Sometime it forgets the staircase or the windows, but one cannot think of everything. When it builds a hospital, it draws the plans according to the continuous air-current system. That sweeps away the patients in the twinkling of an eye, but this makes room for others.

Do not place too much stress, therefore, on the criticisms applicable to the State's architecture. Judge it rather by its other trades, in which it is without rival. It is certain, for instance, that nowhere in the universe do they make porcelain as expensive as that of Sèvres, for a soup-plate costs the State, and us to an extent, some fifty francs. On the other hand, it has not its like for the glare of its gilt and the dazzle of its enamel; it is necessary to put on skates when eating from a Sèvres service. However, no one ever eats from a Sèvres service, and the ugliest—that is, the most important—pieces do not remain in France. It is consoling to reflect that they are given to foreign sovereigns.

Yes . . . . but! . . . . the State makes tapestry too. It costs twenty-five thousand francs a yard; only it imitates painting, which is much less expensive, but much more beautiful. Besides, a thing that is not an imitation of another thing has no value in our eyes. But, if the State tapestries cost a great deal, it must be remembered that they are very pretty—when rolled up!

The State is also a printer. It prints magnificently works that nobody reads, because they interest nobody except the author, and it is doubtful if they interest even him. Then it prints blanks and forms that could be had for one-tenth the money from any little printer in the neighborhood. But the voting and tax-paying grocers can proudly deliver their pepper in cornets coming from the national printing-office.

It is engaged in transportation enterprises, and, while its railway carriages are anything but comfortable, railway journeys are more expensive and railway officials less polite here than anywhere else.

It is a colonist, and in its colonies, instead of cultivating cotton, cocoa, caoutchouc, and precious woods, it cultivates office-holders. Of all its thirty-six trades this is the one at which it is best; nowhere else do they cultivate office-holders as well.

The State also follows many other trades: if you only knew how well it follows them! So do not stop with its matches, its tobacco, its porcelain, its tapestry, its printing-office, and its theatres. The State is also an expert in literature. When it awards a prize to a work, or, by competition, command, or choice, causes one to be brought forth, one may be sure that, once having its prize, it will never more be heard of.

But it is a schoolmaster! It creates Babylonian universities, gigantic faculties, and schools beyond the limits of one's vision. And in these universities and schools it makes bachelors, and these bachelors are absolutely incapable of guiding their own lives and earning their own bread with the knowledge that they have gained. I believe too that among its thirty-six trades the State is a philosopher. It teaches little citizens how they should think; consequently it is delightful to see how they do think! It is true that official ways of thinking change every ten years; but, that there may be no jealous rivalry, all these ways are as good as the matches.

And now, O honest peasant who the other day brought the State a goose, you know what the State is. It has thirty-six trades, and even more, but it is good at none. It is a do-all and a spoil-all. The day when it shall manufacture alcohol we shall drink rotgut, and the day when it shall bake bread our diet will be what it was when Paris was under siege.

And to think that there are honest fellows who wish to present to us as a most seductive future the State entrusted with yet other missions, the State doing everything, managing everything, fostering everything, monopolizing everything!

We are only too ready to refrain from wiping our noses without the authorization of the State, to admire only what the State patronizes, to turn imploringly to State boards of charity instead of using our own arms and heads.

And yet it would be so easy to lose the habit! Ah! if papas and mammas were not stupid, how readily little boys would learn to do without the State and no longer rely on it, and how quickly it would become what it ought solely to be,—a simple policeman, a good policeman, and not a pretentious botcher of all jobs, even of those which it does not do!

ARSENE ALEXANDRE.

Aggression and the Ballot.

The preliminaries and incidentals in Mr. Yarros's answer to my criticism upon his political attitude as stated in the November issue are matters to be neglected. I might rejoin, to be sure, that ethical discussion with Mr. Yarros is unprofitable because he is joined to his moralistic idol; that ethics is no vaster than other topics that have sometimes been illuminated by polemical treatment; that, if Stirner has failed to impress Mr. Yarros with the truth of egoism, it would be absurd for me to imagine that I could succeed where Stirner has failed; that Mr. Yarros is guilty of a comical lapse, and will be amazed when he realizes it; and that only haste and carelessness can account for his oversight. But all such talk, whether put forward by Mr. Yarros in the form of assertion or by myself in the form of counter-assertion, is mere dogmatic surplusage, which will be heeded only by partisans, who will accept or reject it according to their party lines.

Let us have done with it, then, and proceed straight to the essence of our difference. My criticism was that Mr. Yarros, though admitting that the use of the ballot is an invasive act, tended to make light of its invasive quality by neglecting to consider that aspect of it when weighing the question whether he should ever resort to it. His answer is that the use of the ballot, though generally an aggression, is not always such, and specifically that it is not an aggression when resorted to for the purpose of preventing aggression.

In rejoinder I point out, in the first place, that this answer is a contradiction of the position taken by Mr. Yarros in his first article. In that article he declared that Anarchists "would not deem it ethically improper to use the ballot (which means aggression) for the purpose of furthering the cause of freedom." Now, the logical inference from this form of statement is that the word aggression, which in Mr. Yarros's parenthesis is made the equivalent of use of the ballot, may be substituted for its equivalent in the sentence proper without dis-

turbing the meaning. Making this substitution, we find Mr. Yarros saying that Anarchists "would not deem it ethically improper to aggress for the purpose of furthering the cause of freedom." This, of course, justifies every word of my criticism. And that it correctly represents the idea that Mr. Yarros originally intended to convey is further and abundantly shown by his reference in the succeeding paragraph of his first article to the Spencerian distinction between absolute ethics and relative ethics (a distinction, by the way, which does not materially differ from my doctrine of exceptional cases). If, as Mr. Yarros now maintains, the use of the ballot as he would use it is not aggressive, it is superfluous and beside the mark to justify such use by appeal to relative ethics. If it is not aggressive, it accords with absolute ethics and needs no other justification. In appealing to relative ethics for his justification, Mr. Yarros "gave away" the fact that the thing which he sought to justify was *per se* an aggression.

But, if Mr. Yarros chooses to contradict himself,—to abandon his first position and take up a second, with the air of having done nothing of the sort,—that, again, is a matter, if not to be neglected, at least not to be dwelt upon. Remembering, then, that my criticism of his first position is already justified, let us pass on to his new position, and inquire if he is now secure from criticism.

It is to be borne in mind that the question which Mr. Yarros undertook to discuss was this: Politics being, in general, what they are to-day, can a particular occasion arise when it would be advisable for Anarchists to take part in them? Now, in taking his new position, Mr. Yarros discusses, not this question, but another. In assuming the possibility of voting for a libertarian measure without at the same time participating in aggression, he discards his old premise,—politics being, in general, what they are to-day,—and virtually argues from a new one. He now tacitly premises such a transformation of politics that invasion is eliminated, and concludes therefrom that Anarchists may, on special occasions, participate in them without aggression. A very simple proposition, which nobody will deny. Unfortunately, it has not the slightest bearing on the question whether it is possible for Anarchists to non-aggressively participate in the invasive thing that politics are to-day. When voting shall have become a mere expression of opinion, recorded through the operation of a political mechanism purely voluntary in character, and leaving the minority entire freedom of secession, it very likely will prove a convenient method of practical work, of which Anarchists may properly avail themselves, not simply on special occasions, but whenever they perceive the smallest inducement to do so. But Mr. Yarros knows very well that to-day voting is nothing of the sort, and that it cannot be anything of the sort as long as Archy lasts.

Mr. Yarros cannot go to the polls to vote for a libertarian measure. Any vote that he casts, unless it be for an executive or judicial officer, must be for a law-maker. If he votes for a man who favors a particular libertarian measure, this man will vote in the legislature, as Mr. Yarros's chosen representative, not alone for the one libertarian measure, but for a thousand invasive measures. Any man who would not do so could not be elected, for the majority are in favor of invasion in most matters. And even were Mr. Yarros to cast his ballot for a man who would vote in the legislature for none but libertarian measures (which is outside the hypothesis, for Mr. Yarros proposes to vote only when it seems probable that his vote will be decisive, and no vote can be decisive that is cast for a man who has no chance of success), his candidate, if elected, would necessarily draw a salary out of a fund gathered by compulsory taxation. If this candidate were not elected, still Mr. Yarros's ballot for him would be counted and, probably, printed out of this same robbers' fund. And the same would be true, were this ballot cast for a constitutional amendment or for a special measure submitted directly to popular vote. In any and all these cases there would be aggression, and Mr. Yarros, by participating, would make himself an accomplice in aggression. The responsibility for the consequences he would share equally with all other voters. These consequences include the destruction of life and limb as truly (though generally not as directly) as do those of "propaganda by deed." Thus Mr. Yarros's claim that by voting he would commit no violation of equal liberty and would injure nobody is shown to be without foundation. In the absence of such foundation, his entire case falls to the ground, and my criticism remains absolutely unimpaired. T.

A Cry and a Lie.

In the November issue of Liberty there was one article that especially concerned Mr. George Macdonald, besides several that did not. Finding it rather awkward to make answer to the former, he naturally preserves silence concerning it, and tries to drown his silence, so to speak, by making a great noise about one of the latter. Unable to defend himself, he attempts a defence of Henry George, and, promptly discovering that no defence of George is possible, he makes me the object of a wild attack. He says that, even if my charge against George is well-founded, still he (Macdonald), in my place, would have written the article on George's treachery to relieve his feelings and then refrained from printing it; the insincerity of which affectation of Christian spirit he proceeds to exhibit by indicting me, at some length and with more than some bitterness, for an act of faithlessness parallel and equal to that which I charge upon George. Why did not Macdonald, in the abundance of his forgiving love, relieve his feelings by simply penning, instead of printing, this indictment? Even admitting that I am a traitor, and an ill-natured one at that, does that base treachery which in Mr. George is a trivial matter deserving to go scot-free become in my case, simply by the supplement of a little ill-nature, an offence too heinous for any but vitriolic punishment?

You do not believe it, Macdonald. You are not filled with that spirit of charity for wrong-doers which it suits you on occasion to profess. It is the principal business of your life, considered solely in its public aspect, to hold up humbugs to ridicule and scorn. You show no charity. If you cry out when I lash Henry George, it is simply because that particular form of humbuggery which consists in believing one thing while saying another is more attractive to you than to me. It is not because you are opposed to chastisement; it is because you do not like to have your pets chastised. For one who continually chastises others to put in a plea of no-chastisement when his friends, or people who are like his friends, are chastised, is the act of a cry-baby,—a *rôle*, Macdonald, in which I had not before observed you. I assure you that it is not a pretty spectacle.

When you chastise me, Macdonald, I do not play the cry-baby. I do not cry out because it hurts. I am willing to accept all the hurt that I deserve. Whip me when I deserve it, and I will strive not only to take it stoically, but also to profit by it. I ask not your mercy, your forgiveness, or your love. I ask only justice. I ask simply that you will not lie. *And in this case you have lied.* You charge that my attitude on the Venezuelan question was an act of faithlessness to my principles, and in proof of this you offer the utterly false statement that I said a war with England just at that time would be a good thing. It is true that you qualify by remarking that, in quoting me, you are depending on a fallible memory. But this qualification is wholly nullified by the positiveness with which you state, basing yourself on this false quotation, that you "could prove me as faithless as it is possible that Henry George was," and by the tone of your paragraph throughout. If you had any doubt as to the reliability of your memory, you should have been cautious in building upon it; in failing of this caution, you have fathered your statement as absolutely as if you had made no qualification whatever; and, in thus fathering it, you have lied.

Let us see, now, whether I said that war with England would be a good thing. Here are my actual words:

> The least evil that can come out of it [the Venezuelan situation], now that matters have gone so far, is the subordination and postponement of those problems in which Anarchists are most interested, and the intensification of the difficulties of those problems by a large addition to the tax-payer's burden in consequence of the enormous expenditure for military purposes that is now inevitable, whether war shall follow or not.
>
> If war follows, there will be added to this the greater evils of a tremendous indebtedness incurred for the prosecution of the war, an extension and a tightening of the money power's grip, another generation of pensioners to support, and a pervasion of all our institutions by that spirit of militancy and tendency to Archistic centralization which is always to be found at the heels of war and of which we have had bitter experience for the last thirty years.
>
> If, with or without war, Great Britain succeeds in extending her possessions upon the American continent, then there is in store the greatest evil of all,—namely, the ultimate partition of this continent among the great European powers, and the consequent transfer, for a period without visible limit, of one-half of America's energies and resources from productive purposes to purposes that are at best defensive and at worst destructive. Then the curse of militancy will be upon us in its direst form.

Now, my position on the Venezuelan question was, and is, that, if we should be forced to a choice between these horrible evils, it would be advisable to prefer the second to the third. The declaration that this is equivalent to saying that war with England would be a good thing, or that it is parallel, as an act of conscious infidelity to principle, with Henry George's hiding behind the plea of a court's infallibility, is as

foolish as false, and as impudent as foolish. If, as Macdonald says, monumental gall must always receive the tribute of his admiration, the bouquets that he incessantly throws at himself must cause the florists to look upon him as their "angel." T.

Principle and Method.

In his comments on my article on political action, in the last issue of Liberty, Mr. Tucker makes the following charges against me: that the tendency of my reasoning is to make light of the aggressive aspect and character of the ballot; that, instead of frankly planting myself on the "excellent doctrine" that the end justifies the means,—a doctrine which my argument impliedly asserts, in Mr. Tucker's judgment,—I resort to euphemisms, or try to deceive myself with vain phrases; that I commit myself to the doctrine of "exceptional cases"; and, finally, that I unwittingly confess that in practice I would find exceptional cases oftener than Mr. Tucker. On the general question of ethics further controversy would be unprofitable, because I know that Mr. Tucker is joined to his egoistic idol, and because the subject is too vast for polemical treatment. If Darwin and Spencer have failed to impress Mr. Tucker with the scientific importance of evolutionary ethics, it would be absurd for me to imagine that my chances of success were better. But the points raised against the above mentioned statement are relatively simple, and I am tempted to enter upon an examination of them.

Do I make light of the aggressive aspect of the ballot? I deny this impeachment. I contented myself with a parenthetical allusion to the aggressiveness of the ballot, instead of enlarging and dwelling upon the matter, simply and solely because I never dreamed that special emphasis or amplification was necessary. To argue in Liberty that majority rule is aggression is to burst an open door. I passed over the question as too well settled for argumentation.

But, says Mr. Tucker, the tendency of the whole article is in conflict with this position. I deny it, and am really surprised that so keen and logical a thinker as Mr. Tucker should have fallen into so egregious a blunder as that which prompted his criticism. He lost sight of a most vital and all-important distinction,—of the essential difference between form or appearance and actual substance. I distinctly stated that I should not use the ballot and the machinery of government except for the purpose of enlarging liberty and diminishing aggression, and Mr. Tucker accuses me of favoring aggression, of violating equal freedom! Here is his own language, truly astonishing:

> In declaring that he would vote if absolutely sure that his vote would decide the fate of a libertarian measure,—that is, would commit an aggression,—that is, again, would violate equal liberty,—he surely acts upon the doctrine of "exceptional cases," etc.

Now this is a most comical lapse, and Mr. Tucker will be amazed to find himself guilty of it. Only haste and carelessness can account for the oversight. A vote for any measure in the direction of equal liberty cannot be a violation of equal liberty. The form is the same, the content different. The ballot is generally employed for purposes of aggression, but those who should employ it for the purpose of preventing the perpetuation of aggression and securing an extension of personal liberty could not possibly become guilty of aggression. Suppose the issue is free trade versus protection, and suppose my vote gives free traders a majority and thus insures the adoption of free trade. If my use of the ballot has been aggressive, some person must exist whose rights, whose legitimate freedom, have been invaded by the adoption of free trade, by my vote for free trade. But, since free trade is a corollary from equal freedom, no one's rights are violated by the establishment of free trade. If no one's rights are violated, those who vote for free trade are not guilty of any offence. When there are no aggressed upon, there are no aggressors.

It is true that the majority, by voting for free trade, force, or threaten to force, free trade upon the minority. But, since free trade simply means the absence of restriction upon trade, the majority has a perfect right, under equal freedom, to prevent the minority from imposing restrictions,—that is, from committing aggression. It would be an act of aggression for the majority to prevent the minority from building custom houses and taxing *themselves*, but a vote for free trade does not necessarily involve any interference with the minority's right to tax and fetter themselves. Doubtless the majority of those who vote for free trade would also vote to prohibit the minority from maintaining a protective system for themselves, but that does not invest *my* act with the character of aggression. What *I* did was to vote for freedom, for the absence of restrictions. I injured nobody and hence have not transgressed the limits of equal liberty.

How absurd, then, it is to say that there is no difference in principle between using the ballot to secure greater freedom and using dynamite! Dynamite deprives men of life and limb; the use of the ballot for the purpose of securing freedom interferes with no one's exercise of his faculties, and, while it removes existing restraints and interferences in the interest of the majority, it does not necessarily impose any restraints upon the minority.

It follows that there is no objection whatever, from the standpoint of equal freedom, to the employment of the ballot for non-invasive purposes. The only objection which Libertarians in party politics is that upon which I laid stress,—the danger of "impairing that force which they aim to exercise in their own distinctive work," to use Mr. Tucker's expression of my idea,—the danger of confusing the public mind and obliterating Anarchism as an independent factor in the larger political life. To repeat what I said in my previous article, non participation in politics for libertarian purposes is not enjoined by any ethical principle; it is simply a necessary condition of successful propaganda under ordinary conditions.

Need I say anything about the other counts of the indictment? After the above elucidation, it must be clear to any logical mind that I am not guilty of letting in the doctrine of exceptional cases in the manner alleged by Mr. Tucker. By "exceptional cases" we mean violations of equal liberty; my cases are not violations of any principle, but departures from a chosen policy. It follows likewise that I cannot be fairly charged with deceiving myself with vain phrases. It is doubtless better to refuse recognition of the governmental idea even indirectly, and the man who goes to the ballot box will doubtless be represented by some, in spite of the most explicit and reiterated denials, as countenancing and accepting the State principle. These are important considerations, and should ordinarily be decisive and controlling. But the fact remains that a vote for any free measure, for any law in the direction of equal freedom, is not a threat of aggression, since the enforcement of the law itself would not be an aggression.

I fear Mr. Tucker will have to sustain my demurrer to his complaint and acknowledge himself defeated. He has the consolation of knowing that even Homer nods occasionally. V. Y.

The Right to Peddle.

To the Editor of Liberty:

Part of this speech was made by me at our City Hall almost a year ago. Other parts I have added from time to time, as I agitate the question involved continually at my store.

"The defendant is accused of having peddled in Red Bud without paying therefor the license required by city ordinance. I move to dismiss the case because the license ordinance in question conflicts with the first paragraph of the constitution of Illinois, which says that all people have inalienable rights to life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness. If we have to pay a license before we can peddle, our inalienable right to that pursuit of happiness is a qualified one, and not an inalienable one. Besides, nobody has a right to take this man's money for a fine, or to deprive him of his liberty for a moment. I call that stealing under city ordinance. We are not so hard up in Red Bud that we must steal. Living in Red Bud myself, I do not want to stand idly by, when such wrongs are perpetrated upon anybody, no matter how humble he may be."

The Magistrate.—"Do you not want this man to pay his share of taxation in the only way we can reach him, for you have to pay taxes?"

Answer.—"Because you rob me by taxation, must I help you rob this man?"

Magistrate.—"Three dollars fine and costs. Make it five dollars, or go to jail."

Defendant paid cost and fine, and I declared that this question would never be settled until it is settled right. And I continue to discuss it, saying to all my neighbors that I will help them keep out peddlers where they are not wanted, but, if a single individual wants to buy from a peddler, I have no right to lay anything in their way. If we owe our neighbors anything, we owe them justice, fairness, equal liberty. More than once similar acts of injustice have fanned the passions of men who were maltreated into terrible acts of violence, such as setting the town on fire. Fair treatment would never have given them even the thought to get revenge. All people have not the good nature and wisdom to return good for evil; it is certainly not wise to rob them, or to restrict their constitutional right by unnecessary laws.

Louis Lesaulnier.

Red Bud, Ill., September 22, 1896.

Anarchist Letter-Writing Corps.

The Secretary wants every reader of Liberty to send in his name for enrolment. Those who do so thereby pledge themselves to write, when possible, a letter every fortnight, on Anarchism or kindred subjects, to the "target" assigned in Liberty for that fortnight, and to notify the secretary promptly in case of any failure to write to a target (which it is hoped will not often occur), or in case of temporary or permanent withdrawal from the work of the Corps. All, whether members or not, are asked to lose no opportunity of informing the secretary of suitable targets. Address, Stephen T. Byington, Belvidere, N. J.

☞ For the present the fortnightly supply of targets will be maintained by sending members a special monthly circular, alternating with the issue of Liberty.

Friends will remember that, although only two targets a month now appear in Liberty, I am still using four a month, and need to be supplied accordingly.

Target, section A.—The Detroit, Mich., "Longshoreman" invites letters on topics of interest in the following words:

Make your letters short and to the point, and mail them so that they will reach us not later than Thursday of each week. We desire ideas upon organization, methods, remedies, or any subject of social reform, or comments upon ideas or theories advanced by others. Write only upon one side of the paper, and sign your name, not necessarily for publication, but as a matter of good faith.

Section B.—The "Industrial Advocate," 319 Barclay Block, Denver, Col., edited by Wm. Holmes, is hospitable to letters showing why laborers should distrust government. Stephen T. Byington.

Waiting.

Like something carved in changeless stone, she waits
Outside the city's barred and locked gates;
The men who come and go pass idly by,
Nor deign to turn upon her form an eye.

In painted face and borrowed trappings, fair,
Black Falsehood leers, and looks upon her there;
And murmurs low: "Nay, none shall know her, none:
For all their gold well I my work have done."

The generations rise, and pause, and go;
And still the stream of life flows to and fro.
Unmoving, mighty, still her figure stands,
With vast, calm brow, and patient, folded hands.

'Tis Freedom, the great mother. She is strong,
And long can wait, for she has waited long.
There is the light of knowledge in her look;
She reads the future as an open book.

She knows, where'er their wills the tyrants wreak,
That slow their power from day to day grows weak;
That slow the people learn to feel the lie
Breathed down to them from those who sit on high.

Sometime, or near or far, the gates within,
A cry shall rise of dissolution's din;
And those who pause not now will come and plead:
"We knew thee not: thou art our leader. Lead!"

Then that grand shape shall move; and, when the last
The slave's linked chains from off his hands has cast,
She shall be seen there at the leader's post,
Before the throng,—the head of all the host.

Until that hour, she looks, and keeps her peace.
While all around the turmoil doth not cease,
She feels nor passion nor the touch of hate,—
Her ends inscribed upon the rolls of fate.

William Francis Barnard.

Consolation.

Wake with me and watch with me,
Friend whose soul is yearning
For the future great and free,
For the time that is to be,
Fair as spring returning.

Hope with me, exult with me,
Hearts in bondage aching;
For the hours of thraldom flee,
And the dawn of Anarchy
In man's mind is breaking.

Man shall serve and kneel no more,
Sigh and weep no longer;
And the world he doth deplore
To himself he shall restore,
Being wiser, stronger.

Hearts to hearts shall cling in love;
None shall friendship smother.
Naught below nor aught above
Shall the human spirits move
To subdue each other.

Glorious shall be the day
Of emancipation.
Then shall nature have full sway,
And the earth look young and gay,
Like a new creation.

Basil Dahl.

Municipal Book-keeping.

[Newcastle Chronicle.]

If, as some people would have us believe, England is slowly exchanging her traditional individualism for the doctrines of the collectivist, her conversion can certainly not be attributed to any lack of object lessons in the merits or demerits of the system she is alleged to be viewing with favor. Experience has accumulated rapidly of late. Whilst the men of business are still raging furiously against the mismanagement of the telephones since their acquisition by the post office, the rate-payers of the metropolis have been startled by the light thrown upon the peculiar methods of book-keeping, to use the mildest language permissible, pursued by the works committee of the London county council. We do not gather that the council itself was much exercised, in the first instance at any rate, by the heterodox ideas which seem to have dominated the minds of the financiers of its works department, nor, seeing that the funds dealt with were those of the mere community, was there, perhaps, any sufficient reason why the council should have concerned itself greatly about their disposal. But the matter attracted attention and provoked criticism outside; and, in consequence of the sharpness and persistency of the animadversions directed against the works committee from unofficial quarters, a sub-committee was appointed to find out what really was the situation. The report of this sub-committee, endorsed by the works committee, was presented to the council. It is a portentous document; but, before glancing at its contents, it is worth while to recall how the department to which it refers came into existence. The London county council, established as the successor to the discredited metropolitan board of works, was intended to discharge for London duties analogous to those discharged for provincial boroughs by their town councils. But, in the judgment of the Socialistic faction, who, by rather unworthy tactics, succeeded in securing control of the young administrative machine, it was destined to create a new heaven and a new earth on the banks of the Thames. London was to be full of rate-provided sweetness and light, and especially was the council to set an example to employers of labor. It was to be a model for the imitation of capitalism all the world over. In accordance with these aspirations, the council resolved to discard the old-fashioned plan of inviting tenders for the execution of its schemes, and resolved to do its work itself. The contractor's trade was, in fact, municipalized, so far as the council had the power to municipalize it. By this step, it was pleaded, the middleman would be abolished, and the retention of his share of the profits would enable the council to be lenient to the ratepayers and generous to their workmen simultaneously. That was the expectation. Whether it is ever likely to be realized may be gleaned from the report submitted to the council.

In the first place, the sub committee enters a plea of guilty. It is constrained to admit that the charges brought against the works department are substantially true. Although, in the opinion of the investigators, there is no reason whatever to think that "any actual diversion for personal profit of the money or property of the council" has occurred, the department is a hot-bed of account cooking. Since April, 1895, "a system seems to have been initiated and freely practised under which frequent instances were producible of falsely signed and bogus transfers of materials from one job to another; transfers of materials valued at altogether unwarranted prices; incorrect appropriation of invoices to a job when the goods were not used; materials sent from stock and not debited to the job; the deliberate alteration up and down of the ascertained cost of a job for purposes of so called departmental advantage." There is a good deal that is amusing as well as alarming in the notion of the "ascertained" cost of a job being not only pulled down, but also pushed up, in deference to the assumed necessities of the department. But the whole indictment is as pretty a one as could well be preferred. What do men of business think of it? It would appear that the object of the financial juggling was "to equalize the apparent result of individual operations, and not to allow any one job to show either a large profit or a heavy loss as compared with the estimate on which it was undertaken." No doubt, the principal aim was to impress the public favorably. Just as a feeling of confidence in the far-sightedness of the inland revenue and customs officials has been engendered by the habit the chancellor of the exchequer has of holding up their estimates to popular admiration, so a feeling of confidence in the works department, which had not been established with universal approval, was to be created by incessant demonstrations of its exactitude and business capacity. People were to be taught to swear by that works department which they had originally sworn at. But every person endowed with a vestige of the commercial instinct knows perfectly well that the dodge resorted to—of lumping a large number of undertakings together, allocating to this one charges which should belong to that, and claiming expenditure for that which should belong to the other, and finally deriving a profit from the whole group—is a long stride along a road at the termination of which is insolvency. An individual who should conduct business on these lines would be tempted to persevere with enterprises which were involving him in hopeless loss, and to neglect others which would, if cultivated, render him a handsome return; and, necessarily, to persevere with losing enterprises, while neglecting profitable ones, is to court bankruptcy. And, as it is with an individual, so it must be with a community. Yet this is the system which has been practised in the works department. The responsible officials saw, for example, that a job at Colney Hatch was going to entail a heavy loss as compared with the estimates. Thereupon, materials required for the work were sent to Colney Hatch, and charged to undertakings in progress elsewhere.

Although, as we have noted already, the sub-committee declare that there is no reason to suppose that these "diversions" have been committed for personal gain, it is somewhat difficult to acquit their authors of all personal motive. Love for a department as a department is not a very intelligible passion. But affection for a department because it provides one with bread, cheese, and position is intelligible enough; and it is not easy to avoid the suspicion that much of this fraudulent book-keeping owes its inception to an apprehension that, if the works department could not show superior results as compared with those attained under the contracting system, it would sacrifice its popularity, and loss of popularity would entail its suppression. If this was the idea, it can hardly be described as impersonal; and, if it was not the idea, one is puzzled to conceive why all this progressive book-keeping was considered requisite. Subordinate functionaries would not have made fictitious entries, arranged bogus transfers, and all the rest of it, without superior orders; and, if those instructions were given, it is time the London ratepayers learned by whom. If the book-keeping of the works department of the London county council is a fair sample of municipal book-keeping in certain circumstances, what are the value of municipal statistics having reference to municipalized undertakings?

A "Truth" That is Not a Truth.

To the Editor of Liberty:

By way of postscript to Bolton Hall's letter in the November number of your paper, you say that "the Single Tax has received much attention in Liberty, which cannot spare quite the whole of its space to that ambitious theory." But, in spite of your warning, at least one of Mr. Hall's doctrines deserves a challenge. "Wherever population is increasing," he says, "rents advance." This is a favorite dictum of our Single Tax friends, but Mr. Hall, quoting it to-day with so much unction, indicates that his information is drawn from within a rather narrow circle. What may be more or less true within his immediate vision may not be true universally. Out west here, for instance, that cat refuses to jump; in fact, has been acting contrary to that rule these twenty years or more. A steady shrinkage of rents and values is the prevalent order of things in the very face of a constant increase of population. It is not the landlord who dictates to the tenant. Along with the increasing population the tenant (or buyer) has become master of the situation, and it is he who now rubs it into the landlord according to Hoyle.

In the eyes of the average peanut-vender or other loyal citizen it may appear as a mere coincidence (provided he is aware of the fact at all) that, since the money monopoly ascended to and is occupying the throne, land monopoly has gathered more pepper than persimmons. Rather a significant "coincidence," however, to the looker on in Venice. Hence, under this new dispensation, one at least of the standing texts of the Single Tax gospel will have to be revised.

WERNER BOECKLIN.

BURLINGTON, IOWA.

Rent.

"What is a landlord, Johnny?"

"A landlord is a man that father pays rent to, sir."

"What does the landlord do for a living, Johnny?"

"He don't do nawthin', sir; he just lives on the rent that people what earns it pays him."

"Why do they pay him, Johnny?"

"'Cause he wouldn't let them work on his land, if they didn't, sir."

Rent is money paid for the privilege of going to work.

In common talk rent means many things. We speak of the rent of a house as well as of the rent of land; of the rent of the furniture in the house, of the water-rents, and the rent of a post-office box.

But in economic discussion, for convenience and clearness, the word rent means only what is paid for the use of land. In this sense rent is one of the most easily perceived forms of usury, or use-money; for rent is paid, not for any transitory or consumable qualities of fertility or otherwise, which may be restored to it by labor, but for the location merely as a location, valuable in proportion to its nearness to a market, to the contiguity of a water course, or to some other advantages, not conferred upon it by labor or removed by use. So that, after the tenant has finished using it and returned it to the landlord, nothing has been received by the tenant, in return for the rent that he has paid, but permission to use the land; nor has the landlord given anything in return for the rent he has received; he has simply compelled the tenant to divide up, by force, supported by the ignorance and prejudice of the tenant himself.

Picture the position of a community in which the land is unowned. Imagine, if you will, the Pitcairn islanders upon their first landing, or the Swiss family of the story. They dig clams out of the sandy beach, or knock oysters off the rocks; they pick the fruit that happens to grow wild, and dig edible roots. The clams and oysters and the rest are their natural wages,—the whole product of their labor in obtaining them. Presently, these being diminished, they plant and gather crops; they cut trees and build houses; and still the whole product of their labor is their reward.

Suppose now the land to be owned. The island, we may imagine, is claimed by England. Some day a solitary Englishman is cast ashore from a wreck.

"This is my island," he explains; "I was just coming to occupy it, when I was shipwrecked. Behold my documents, constituting me lawful owner! Leave the island at once."

"But," they reply, "we shall have to walk into the sea."

"What does that matter to me?" replies the owner; "go and drown. It is my land, and you must leave it; but, if you want to stay, you may on this condition: you must divide with me all you produce; you must give me a quarter of every bushel of oysters you gather, and a quarter of every crop you make."

"Why should we divide with you?" they reply. "Lend a hand and help us, and we will give you your share cheerfully; but, as for maintaining you in idleness, that we will not do."

"But I have bought this land," urges the claimant; "I have paid good money to the English government for it."

If the islanders are blinded by the popular respect for existing institutions, they will deferentially admit his claim, and pay him tribute for permitting them to live, but, if they are guided by common sense, they will reply: "No man and no body of men can justly confer upon you the power to drive people from land which they are using to work for their living. There is room enough for you; go to work yourself, or go without. We are many, you are one; you can't fool us into working to pay you rent for you to live on in idleness."

Rent and interest are the slices which mistaken laws, supported by a mistaken sense of justice, permit to be clipped from the earnings of workers by those who, as far as they are rent and interest takers, do no productive labor.

Rent is paid by the worker to the idler for the privilege of going to work; interest, we may note incidentally,—although this is not the place to enlarge upon it,—is paid to other idlers by the workers for the privilege of exchanging the products of their labor. Landlord and money-lender, as such, are idlers, although they may have occupations in which they are producers along with the rest.

The whole aim of economic social reform is to secure to the producer the entire product of his labor, and to make it impossible for anybody to forcibly take from a producer any part of his earnings.

Once conceived as an engine by which idleness makes industry tributary, the destructive effects of rent are seen at every turn.

Go through any of our great cities, and examine the houses where the workers live. You will find them piled story upon story, side by side, so closely that the very air which intervenes is foul with their exhalations; you will find floors carpetless, beds without covering, cupboards without food, all stripped to satisfy the monthly demand for them to divide up their earnings with the landlord. I do not speak now of extremities, when sickness or hard times cuts off the supply and there is nothing left to pawn; when the devilry of the law flings the victims upon the sidewalk, and calls it justice. I speak only in cool blood of the ordinary condition of the workers, when so large a proportion of their earnings must be handed over to the landlord that their life is reduced to the barest existence. In contrast, note the superabundance of the rich, the continual round of costly pleasuring which they enjoy. Houses filled with trash upon which thousands have been spent in the merest wantonness. Ormolu cabinets littered with little wagons and houses and toothpicks of gold and jewels, neither beautiful or useful,—simply an avenue for squandering. Decorations that do not decorate; retinues of servants for ostentation, not aid; breakfasts and luncheons and dinner-parties, where the excellence of the food barely counteracts the vapidity of the feeders.

People talk of abolishing the tenement-house. All the wealth and display and fashion, together with all the real refinement and scholarship of the day, rest upon the tenement-houses, and is supported by them.

"Go to work," roughly says the man in the thousand-dollar sealskin overcoat, as some poor wretch asks alms. He does not know himself the extent of his cruelty. He has been brought up to think that anybody can go to work that wants to. Soon the poor devil will learn that the reason why he can't go to work is that the opportunities to work are held out of his reach by Sealskin, and his like, and he, in turn, will say to them: "Go to work!"

Observe, too, the desolation of the rural places by rent. Why don't people occupy the land that is vacant? is the frequent question. There are deserted farms everywhere, it is alleged, pining for cultivators. Investigate it for yourself, and you will find it is not true. Everywhere the tenant may have gone, but the landlord holds on. His price is always a little higher than he can get. Even if he should offer the use of the land for nothing, the tenant would know very well that the improvements which he would have to make would shortly belong to the landlord.

People crowd into the cities, not because they prefer the normal city to the normal country, but because, in the first place, poor as it is, the living that the city offers is better than that which can be earned in the country; in the second place, because the city with its false excitements renders the condition of the enslaved tolerable, which would be intolerable in the loneliness of the country, depopulated by landlordism.

For the most part, throughout the farming country the landlord takes the form of the holder of the mortgage, who becomes virtually the owner of the farm, and who collects his six, seven, or eight per cent. of what is really rent, until the steady drain, or some untoward accident of a bad season, makes him the owner of the land at a third of its value. Everywhere we find the whole population of the country eagerly handing over a fifth part of their income in return for the landlord's gracious permission to work.

Enormous as is the amount thus taken as rent from the product of the workers, it is little as compared with the vastly greater amount which might be produced, and which would be produced, were it not for the prohibition to produce which the power of demanding rent as a condition of labor constitutes. What this amount would be it is impossible to calculate, but some notion can be formed from a consideration of the vast numbers of people who are unable to obtain employment even in good times, while in dull times, as at present, the army of the unemployed is estimated at a million in the United States alone,—throughout the world, where modern industrial conditions prevail, perhaps ten million.

This unproductiveness of landlordism is, too, the reply to those who point out, correctly enough, that the riches of the rich, if divided up equally, would not suffice to appreciably improve the condition of the poor. It is not a division that justice demands; it is the free opportunity to go to work to produce what shall suffice.

Nor is it any reply to say that there is still plenty of cheap land to be had; because it is not only cheap—that is to say, undesirable—land that is held out of use, but also the most valuable and most desirable opportunities. I have in my mind a water-power in a populous State, which at any moment could be sold for five, ten, or even twenty thousand dollars, or could be leased at a corresponding rental. But such prices by no means suit the owners, they are holding it until they can get fifty, or perhaps a hundred, thousand; but the damage they do to the community is not measured by the paltry thousands that they will eventually obtain for removing their embargo, but by the many more thousands in value that would be continually produced were the water-power free to any who would go to work and use it.

In just such a way is the whole country held out of use, the more desirable parts at a high price, the less desirable at a lower price, but each at a higher price than can be immediately obtained. Such a proceeding results in just the same way that a diminution in the size of the continent would act; it makes it appear crowded, when it is really sparsely filled.

We have here in these United States a piece of land some twenty-seven hundred miles wide and perhaps twelve hundred north and south. It contains two thousand million acres of land. Some of this may be accounted uninhabitable,—desert and so on,—but deserts even now produce mineral wealth, and what they could do with the full power of modern inventions nobody can guess. Still, making every allowance, take two-thirds as available land,—say, thirteen hundred thousand acres, or about twenty acres apiece for each man, woman, and baby in the country. Such an area of land would support with ease three hundred million of population, or four times what it now has, and, with improved methods, twice that again; yet with our few—sixty or seventy millions—there is no land; it is all held out of use, while the people starve for need of it.

It is easy to see how this state of affairs has grown upon us. That each one should retain possession of the spot where he had planted his crop seemed incontestably just; that he should also possess against all others the spot where he had built his shelter seemed as indispensable. Such possession is still admitted as an essential condition of progress. Communal control was, indeed, the first, but in the course of development separate individual control became necessary. The better judgment of some individuals as to methods and times of planting, cultivating, and harvesting; the comparison of varying opinions, two heads being better than one proverbially; the advantage of the division of thought as well as of the division of hand-work,—all became available only when individual possession became established.

From the mere possession while in use easily grew the possession from season to season; reasonably enough, too, for the benefit of manuring and tillage extends beyond the moment.

Nor did it seem fair if the occupant were called away, upon one of the frequent wars of the time, or if he were attacked by a long sickness, or by any cause deterred for a good while from working his claim, that his right of possession should lapse.

Ultimately it ended in what we see now,—possession for the purpose of use changed into proprietorship, which is the right to hold out of use: the legal privilege, not only not to use, but to prevent others from using.

Suppose for a moment that the legal power which the lords of the land have were exercised by them as it might be. Suppose the landlords should say to the tenants throughout the country: "Go; we no longer will allow you to occupy our land for any price. Get up; go; leave it!" Out upon the highways forthwith would crowd a vast, homeless herd,—men and women and little children and babies in arms with no place to exist, for the whole earth would be forbidden to them. From the crowded cities out into the country roads they would swarm; from the suburban hamlets into the farm-roads. Neither food or shelter could they obtain without the consent of the owners of the land. And the intelligent newspapers would express surprise that there were so many more "sturdy beggars" than there used to be, and would advise the town authorities to feed them bread and butter with strychnine on it, as one newspaper actually did advise.

For such a state of affairs is what partly exists now. Not all landlords, but some landlords, have said to their tenants: "Go!" And they have had to go.

These are the wretches that we call tramps, and say will not work. It is a charge that no man should dare to make against another, when there is for him who cannot pay no place where he can work without somebody's permission. Not work! He cannot even abstain from work as a Diogenes, or Simon Stylites, or Thoreau, might prefer to. The landlords own even the highways, and, if the disinherited walk there in numbers too great to suit the lords' tastes, they will order out their Gatling guns and disperse the rioters, as they call them.

Now, this state of affairs cannot last. This power of life and death which rests with the land-holders must be limited. In some way it must be brought about that the land—the face of the globe—the place where we all must work for our living—shall be free for us to work upon. It must be reasserted that the land is no more a possible object of mercantile traffic than the bodies of men. As human slavery, once legal and respectable, is at last discredited, so the indirect ownership of men which ownership of the land gives will also be discredited.

It is vain to hope for any improvement through legislation; indeed, it is through legislation, and the superstitious deference paid to legislation, that the trouble has arisen. Remedies have been proposed through law-making, but they would either fail entirely to accomplish the object in view, or they would accomplish it in a clumsy and roundabout fashion, and with indirect evils involved that would more than counterbalance possible benefits.

For instance, it has been proposed to put all taxation on the land, making it unprofitable to hold land without using it, and enabling the government to han-

dle the immense income derived from what would virtually be the rent of all the land for the benefit of the people. There are many objections to this,—more or less obscure to those who have not given thought to economic discussion,—which may be found in controversial literature; only one consideration need we take into account here. If the amount taken by the landlords justly belongs to the producers, why allow the landlords to take it at all? Why trust to the roundabout method of letting the landlord rob the tenant that the politicians may rob the landlords, only to hand the proceeds back to the tenants again?

Further, if it were proposed to hand the amount back to the tenants again, it might not be so bad, but everybody who knows anything knows how much chance there is of a politician handing anything back to anybody. So that really the most that anybody expects from such an arrangement is that the politicians would spend it for the benefit of "the dear people,"—for libraries and baths and soup-kitchens.

Even if this measure of success were accomplished, it would fail to do justice to those who do not want either libraries, or baths, or soup kitchens, to those who have their own ideas as to how to use their earnings,—ideas not gratifiable by any of the benevolent provisions intended to gratify them.

If indeed, the amount of the product taken for the use of land is unjustly taken, the only reasonable remedy is to discover the cause which makes such injustice possible, and, as all science teaches, to remove the cause.

This cause, we have seen, lies in the permanency of the title to land, according to present arrangements. It is just that a man should hold the land that he is using, as long as he wants to use it, with all allowances for temporary absence; but it is unjust that he should be enabled to hold it, when he does not want to use or occupy it.

In the general recognition of this cause of rent is the only possibility of the abolition of rent. The details as to what constitutes use and occupancy of land will vary according to the locality, and as experience may dictate; the principle at the bottom we should recognize without waiting to solve every problem that we may encounter, confident that, when once established in our minds, it will prove a means by which practical problems may be solved, one by one, as they occur.

Land tenure, upon such a principle, would protect all improvements, all labor bestowed upon the land while the occupant wanted to use it; it would, on the other hand, throw open all unused land for anybody to go to work upon that wanted to.

Land speculation would come to an end. The land as an instrument of production, not as an article of merchandise, free to all to use, where not already occupied, would be broad enough and fertile enough to give home and food to a score for every one that now lives upon it.

This view of land-occupancy will appeal most strongly to the country dweller; to the townsman a slightly different point of view will make it clearer.

When a man no longer wishes to use his land, what does he do? Rents it, of course. Rented land, then, is land which the owner is not using or occupying; the amount that he takes as rent is taken by violence from those who work for it; in justice the landlord has no claim to it. For his house, indeed, he may claim whatever deterioration it may suffer by use, but for house and land together nothing more may he justly claim.

Consequently why not arrange a rent-strike? It is not easy to find scabs to fill the place of tenants who simply refuse to pay, Landlords hesitate about ejection by wholesale. Moreover, if the idea spread; if ten thousand or twenty thousand at the same moment should simply refuse to pay,—where could the landlords find a remedy? How could deputy sheriffs in sufficient number be found to serve notices, or policemen to arrest, or courts to try, or prisons to hold, such a number.

They would hardly dare to assassinate such strikers separately, and it would not be possible to shoot them down in mass with machine-guns.

All that the workers in cities have to do, when once the idea that rent is unjust is generally accepted, is simply to refuse to pay rent; all that the workers in country have to do, when once the idea that to hold unused land is unjust is generally accepted, is to go to work wherever they find unused land. Landlordism then will vanish, as the morning mist dissolves,—without violence, without legislative trickery, as gently and naturally as the tree blossoms and the sun rises.

In that day a new humanity will inhabit the earth. The faces of men hardened and distorted by slavery will glow in the beauty of freedom; the hearts of men seared by oppression will be oppressed no longer by fear of want.

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